

# Chapter 1 • Our Guiding Directions

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## MISSION

The mission of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is to improve the quality of life for individuals and families in need. We will help people achieve safe, self-sufficient, healthy and secure lives.

## VISION

Our vision is a **healthy, safe and productive Washington**.

The people we serve are members of families, students in schools, and residents in communities. In most cases, they are more strongly connected to those institutions than they are to DSHS programs.

Therefore, to achieve our mission and vision, we are committed to providing our clients with coordinated services through partnerships with communities, tribes, counties, service providers, schools, the criminal justice system, and other agencies within private and public sectors.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Below are the guiding principles that direct the department in how we operate and conduct our business.

- Customer focus
- Service coordination
- Responsiveness to diversity
- Strategic thinking
- Collaborative leadership
- Community partnerships
- Accountable performance
- Organization development
- Employee participation
- Result oriented data-based decisions
- Continuous improvement

## PRIORITIES OF GOVERNMENT (POG)

The state-wide POG result teams, coordinated by the Office of Financial Management, continue to refine state-wide strategies to achieve eleven result areas. DSHS actively takes part in the work of three result areas and has been reporting our performance measures at the Governor's Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP) forums since June 2005.

The following are these three result areas:

- Improve the Health of Washington Residents – by providing medical assistance, mental health care, and chemical dependency treatments to those needing help
- Improve the Security of Washington’s Vulnerable Children and Adults – by providing services to keep them safe, healthy, and productive
- Improve the Safety of People and Property – by effectively managing and treating juvenile offenders and sex offenders

In addition, DSHS also contributes to the success of the following three POG result areas:

- Improve Student Achievement in Elementary, Middle and High Schools – by providing children and youth under our care with safe learning environment
- Improve the Economic Vitality of Businesses and Individuals – by assisting people in achieving independence and self-sufficiency
- Improve the Ability of State Government to Achieve Results Efficiently and Effectively – by continuous improvements in managing human resources, information technology, purchasing activities, and various risks

## **STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

RCW (Revised Code of Washington) 43.20A.010 defines the purpose of the department as follows.

The department of social and health services is designed to integrate and coordinate all those activities involving provision of care for individuals who, as a result of their economic, social or health condition, require financial assistance, institutional care, rehabilitation or other social and health services. In order to provide for maximum efficiency of operation consistent with meeting the needs of those served or affected, the department will encompass substantially all of the powers, duties and functions vested by law on June 30, 1970, in the department of public assistance, the department of institutions, the veterans' rehabilitation council and the division of vocational rehabilitation of the coordinating council on occupational education. The department will concern itself with changing social needs, and will expedite the development and implementation of programs designed to achieve its goals. In furtherance of this policy, it is the legislative intent to set forth only the broad outline of the structure of the department, leaving specific details of its internal organization and management to those charged with its administration.

Many federal laws and state laws authorized DSHS programs and services. See Appendix 1 for detail information on each program’s statutory authority.